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REGIONAL ISSUES OF ENSURING IDP RIGHTS (based on the example of Dnipropetrovsk region)

For the first time, the issue of internally displaced persons (IDPs) arose in Ukraine after the Russian annexation of Crimea and the escalation of the conflict in part of the Donbas region, which forced approximately 1,5 million people to relocate. A new, significantly stronger wave of forced displacement was caused by the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation. As military actions continue, bombings of populated areas persist, and some territories previously occupied by the enemy are deoccupied, the number and composition of IDPs are constantly changing [1].

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) conducted 18 rounds of population surveys in Ukraine regarding forced migration over a year and a half of the war. These surveys make it possible to assess the number, composition, and dynamics of forced displacement.

According to estimates by the International Organization for Migration, there are 3,555,000 actual IDPs and 4,294,000 individuals who have returned to their habitual residences in Ukraine. The largest number of IDPs reside in the Dnipropetrovsk (14 %) and Kharkiv (12 %) regions. The largest share of IDPs originates from the Donetsk region (28 %). The highest rate of intra-regional displacement is observed in the Kherson (93 %), Donetsk (86 %), Zaporizhzhia (85 %), and Kharkiv (83 %) regions.

As of October 2024, 7 % of IDP households are incomplete families (only one person in the household is over 18 years old, and all others are aged 0 to 17). Most (70 %) actual IDPs expressed their intention to remain in their current location for more than the next three months, while 13 % are considering returning to their places of origin. Among those considering returning, the majority (62 %) stated they are ready to return only after the end of the war.

According to estimates, 80 % of IDPs have been in displacement for more than one year, with the median duration of displacement for all IDPs being two years and three months.

The majority of internally displaced persons (IDPs) (72 %) relocated to other regions, while slightly more than a quarter (27 %) were displaced within their region of origin. The largest number of IDPs moved from Donetsk to the Dnipropetrovsk region – 269,000 people, and from Donetsk to Kyiv – 117,000 people. The highest rates of intra-regional displacement were recorded in the Kherson (93 %), Donetsk (86 %), and Kharkiv (83 %) regions.

High levels of displacement within the frontline regions of Kharkiv (366,000 IDPs) and Zaporizhzhia (176,000 IDPs), along with the high concentration of IDPs in the eastern parts of Kharkiv and Dnipropetrovsk regions, indicate a general desire of IDPs to remain close to their regions of origin [2-3].

Several public authorities are involved in ensuring the rights and freedoms of IDPs in Ukraine, with their activities regulated by over a hundred legal acts. However, the number of challenges arising from the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine is significant [4].

The situation is further complicated by the mass nature of current forced internal displacement, requiring adjustments to the legal and organizational frameworks for ensuring the rights and freedoms of this category of citizens in line with the current state of affairs in the country.

Statistical data highlight the scale of internal migration, the favorable conditions for the region to continue accommodating IDPs, and the high level of IDP integration into the communities of the Dnipropetrovsk region.

A clear understanding of the actual statistics on forced displacement is crucial for:

- integrating this data into the work of state and local authorities in the region and guiding their decision-making processes;
- improving regional budget planning to meet the needs of IDPs;
- developing and implementing local programs to support IDPs;
- balancing the labor market;
- enhancing public services for IDPs in the region, and more.

Among the consequences of the military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, the following can be highlighted:

- an increase in the number of people requiring social support from the state;
- destabilization of economic activity in small and medium businesses in Ukraine, which in turn has increased the number of people falling below the poverty line due to loss of income;
- the departure of a significant number of citizens abroad, affecting various spheres of public life, which in turn has led to a brain drain of the country's intellectual potential, among others.

All of the above-mentioned consequences have also impacted the Dnipropetrovsk region, thus requiring prompt responses from practitioners in the respective fields, as well as the search for new approaches to the protection of IDPs [5].

The future prospects for IDPs remaining in the region must be planned with consideration of their attitudes regarding a return to their permanent places of residence. Thus, the focus of local programs should be directed at:

- organizing temporary housing primarily for women and children;
- implementing social programs of medical and psychological support;
- creating a unified communication system for providing humanitarian aid to IDPs, and more.

To ensure the rights and freedoms of IDPs, attention must be paid to the following aspect: stimulating the creation of new jobs in areas under Ukrainian control.

In this way, by ensuring the economic development of the state and the realization of human potential, the rights and freedoms of IDPs are protected. This development involves the creation of new jobs; ensuring opportunities for retraining and upskilling for IDPs, considering the needs of the economy and regional specifics, among other measures; developing resettlement programs for IDPs in the available housing stock and new buildings; restoring infrastructure in villages in war-affected regions and providing IDPs with housing in these regions.

To optimize processes in this area, it may be effective to involve IDPs in independent construction projects; ensure access to education for IDPs, provide children with resources for free access to remote education; promote the creation of self-organization bodies for IDPs and activate their participation in community life.

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